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Human resources management

Activities of the Ethics Office

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/254, entitled "Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations", in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report annually on the activities of the Ethics Office and the implementation of ethics policies. The report also includes information on the activities of the Ethics Panel of the United Nations, as mandated by the Assembly in its resolution 63/250 on human resources management. It covers the period from 1 August 2013 to 31 July 2014.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report, the ninth since the establishment of the Ethics Office in January 2006, was prepared pursuant to paragraph 16 (i) of General Assembly resolution 60/254, in which the Assembly requested annual reporting on the activities of the Office and the implementation of ethics policies.

2. The report provides an overview and assessment of the activities of the Ethics Office from 1 August 2013 to 31 July 2014, pursuant to its mandate to foster an organizational culture informed by integrity, transparency, accountability and respect.

3. The Ethics Office provides direct services to United Nations staff at all levels. In the period under review, it received 924 requests for its services. Highlights of the reporting period include: responding to 476 confidential requests for ethics advice; managing the 2013 cycle of the financial disclosure programme, requiring review of 4,573 disclosure files; undertaking 152 outreach, training and education activities; administering the Secretariat's first-ever leadership dialogue; enhancing the coherent application of ethics among United Nations entities and advancing policy development; and receiving 55 matters relating to the Organization's protection against retaliation policy. In addition, the Office continued its work in several substantive areas to promote an ethical organizational culture, including highlighting ethical leadership, promoting understanding about ethical obligations, conducting ethical risk assessments and developing evaluative metrics.

4. The Ethics Office made significant progress in its detailed regulatory and policy reviews. In collaboration with other departments, it developed detailed recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the Secretariat's protection against retaliation policy. It also completed its internal assessment of the policies, practices and standards under which the financial disclosure programme operates, in order to enhance the detection and mitigation of personal conflicts of interest.

5. The report complies with General Assembly resolution 63/250 on human resources management, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to include information on the activities of the Ethics Committee (currently the Ethics Panel of the United Nations).

II. Background and general information

6. The Ethics Office was established by the Secretary-General as an independent Secretariat entity upon approval of the General Assembly at the 2005 World Summit (see Assembly resolution 60/1, para. 161 (d)). Pursuant to Secretary-General's bulletins ST/SGB/2005/22 and ST/SGB/2007/11, the mandate of the Office includes:

(a) Administering the Organization's financial disclosure programme;

(b) Providing confidential advice and guidance to staff on ethical issues, including administering an ethics helpline;

(c) Administering the Organization's protection against retaliation policy;

(d) Developing standards, training and education on ethical issues, in coordination with the Office of Human Resources Management and other offices, as appropriate, and conducting ethics outreach;

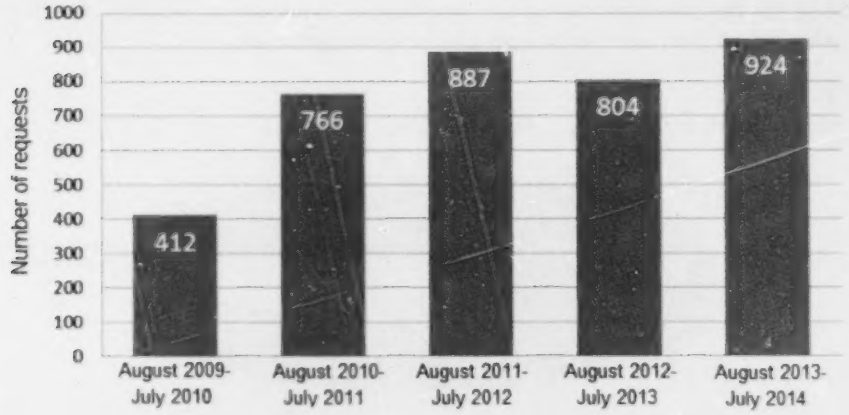
(e) Providing support for ethics standard-setting and promoting policy coherence among the Secretariat and the Organization's funds and programmes.

7. In undertaking its responsibilities, the Ethics Office provides assistance to the Secretary-General in ensuring that all staff members observe and perform their functions consistent with the highest standards of integrity required by the Charter of the United Nations.

8. From 1 August 2013 to 31 July 2014, the Ethics Office received 924 requests for its services, representing an increase of 15 per cent over the previous cycle and 4 per cent from 2011-2012 (see fig. I).

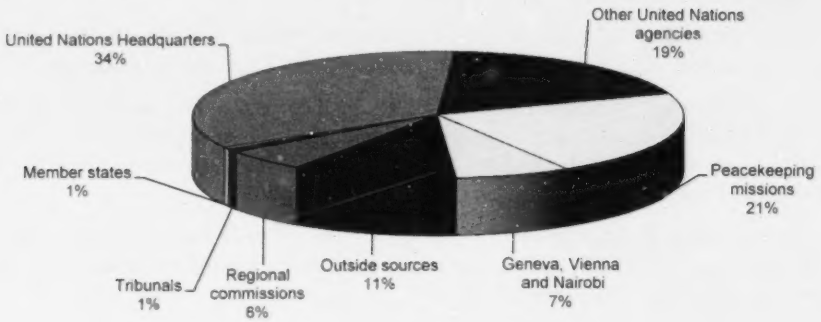
Figure I

Overall requests for Ethics Office services by reporting cycle, August 2009-July 2014



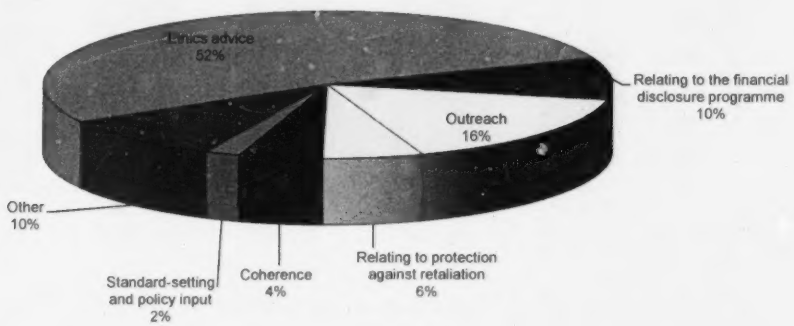
9. The Ethics Office regularly receives requests for its services from multiple locations and entities (see fig. II). Given that the Office is staffed solely in New York, concerted efforts are necessary to reach staff globally. In the period under review, the Office intensified its outreach efforts, as reflected in the increase in requests from missions and offices away from Headquarters.

Figure II
Service requests by source, 1 August 2013-31 July 2014



10. The Ethics Office responds to requests regarding general ethics advice, the financial disclosure programme, protection against retaliation, training and outreach, standard-setting and policy support. As shown in figure III, ethics advice, including relating to the financial disclosure programme, continues to account for most requests for services received (62 per cent in the current cycle).

Figure III
Service requests by category, 1 August 2013-31 July 2014



III. Activities of the Ethics Office

A. Advice and guidance

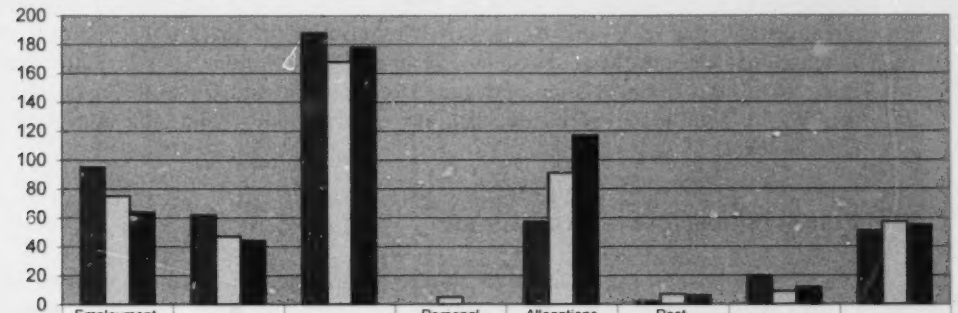
11. The Ethics Office serves as an independent, confidential and impartial entity dedicated to providing timely and high-quality advice to staff concerning the ethical obligations of international civil servants. This advisory function ensures that staff members understand their obligations as embodied in the Charter and in relevant regulations, rules and policies. In helping staff to make decisions consistent with the values and rules of the Organization, the Office helps to mitigate operational and reputational risk.

12. The Ethics Office provides advice to staff and managers in identifying and managing actual or potential conflicts of interest. Such conflicts are often personal in nature, but also may occur at the organizational level.

13. United Nations staff at all levels routinely contact the Ethics Office to obtain confidential advice and guidance on conflicts of interest and other ethical issues. In the current cycle, the Office received 476 requests for advice, an increase of 4 per cent over the previous cycle, and similar to the 2011-2012 cycle. Figure IV presents the major categories of requests for advice over the past three reporting periods.

14. The Ethics Office continues to experience an increase in requests for services that, upon further examination, constitute allegations of wrongdoing. While the Office is not mandated to receive allegations of wrongdoing other than retaliation, it does seek to understand the concerns presented and advise staff members on the options available to them to report and address perceived misconduct.

Figure IV
Requests for ethics advice by cycle, August 2011-July 2014



	Employment-related concerns	Gifts and hospitality	Outside activities	Personal investments and assets	Allegations of wrongdoing	Post-employment restrictions	Procurement ethics	Other conflict of interest
August 2011-July 2012	95	62	188	0	57	2	20	51
August 2012-July 2013	75	47	168	5	91	7	9	57
August 2013-July 2014	64	44	178	0	117	6	12	55

15. The Ethics Office continued to provide independent ethics advice to the Procurement Division of the Department of Management on issues relating to the integrity, anti-corruption and corporate compliance programmes of vendors seeking to do business with the United Nations. Those efforts focused primarily upon the suitability of external ethics and compliance experts retained by vendors to verify that the vendor has implemented business ethics, anti-corruption and compliance programmes that meet the expectations of the United Nations and whether the vendor's integrity initiatives provide sufficient assurance that the vendor has met United Nations expectations and requirements.

16. During the reporting period, the Ethics Office responded to queries from the Procurement Division concerning 12 vendors at various stages of the reinstatement process. Advice for each reinstatement matter requires multiple reviews and close liaison with other departments. The Office worked closely with the Division to provide advice on third-party due diligence, reputational risk, potential organizational and personal conflicts of interest and best practices in anti-corruption programmes. To that end, the Office undertook three new initiatives. First, it

proposed revisions to the expectations of the United Nations regarding ethics and compliance that vendors must satisfy to obtain reinstatement. Second, it proposed requirements concerning corporate compliance programmes to be included in requests for proposals for larger procurements. Third, it customized briefing sessions for chief procurement officers and prospective vendors.

17. The Ethics Office continued to provide independent advice to the Department of Management and the Department of Field Support with regard to the compliance monitorship for two critical service vendors that support peacekeeping. The monitorship establishes a contractual oversight mechanism through which the vendors may continue to provide services, provided that they and their employees comply strictly with United Nations expectations. The second year of the monitorship has been completed and recommendations made to the vendors by the monitors are being implemented.

18. The Ethics Office responded to requests from many United Nations entities for advice and guidance, information-sharing and policy-sharing and best practices. Those entities included the United Nations University, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the World Intellectual Property Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Civil Aviation Organization, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Health Organization and the International Fund for Agricultural Development.

B. Financial disclosure programme

19. The purpose of the financial disclosure programme is to identify, mitigate and resolve personal conflicts of interest. It is administered by the Ethics Office. Designated staff members, including all staff at the D-1 level and above, and those whose principal duties involve procurement and investment, are required to file annual disclosure statements. The review of the disclosures is outsourced to an independent external party.

20. During the 2013 annual filing cycle, beginning on 1 March 2013 and covering the financial disclosure reporting period from 1 January to 31 December 2012, a total of 4,573 filers participated in the programme, including 899 for the first time (19.6 per cent). This represented a decrease of 28 per cent from the 2012 cycle. As at the closing of the 2013 cycle, the programme had achieved a compliance rate of 99.9 per cent, which is parallel to that achieved for the 2012 filing cycle.

21. Filers who are staff of the Secretariat account for some 66 per cent of the total filer population. The 2013 compliance rate for Secretariat staff, including those located in peacekeeping and field missions, was 99.97 per cent (3,012 of 3,013 Secretariat staff were in compliance with the programme requirements), the highest overall compliance level for the Secretariat in the history of the programme. Of the three non-compliant filers in the total programme population, one is a Secretariat staff member and two are employed by other participating United Nations entities. They were referred either to the Office of Human Resources Management or to the sponsoring entities for appropriate action.

22. To facilitate compliance, the Ethics Office provided considerable substantive and technical support to staff, including with regard to accessing or navigating the system, and personalized advice regarding individual disclosure requirements. The Office responded to individual queries within 48 hours. For the 2013 filing cycle, the programme handled some 26,000 e-mails and a smaller number of communications via telephone, mail or office visits. Of that total, some 14,000 were handled directly by Office staff. The Office notified departmental focal points and respective heads of department regarding internal follow-up with those staff who had not completed their disclosure obligations by the designated deadlines. The measures were instrumental in ensuring that gaps in compliance were detected early and remedial measures promptly pursued. Similarly, the external reviewer followed up with a significant number of staff, sending and receiving an additional 12,000 e-mails during the filing year.

23. The verification of filer information for accuracy and completeness is an integral part of the financial disclosure programme. During the 2013 filing cycle, 228 filers were selected for verification through stratified random sampling. All verification participants submitted complete third-party and related documentation, thus continuing a positive compliance trend.

24. During the 2013 filing cycle, the programme's external reviewers identified 172 filers (3.8 per cent of the filer population) as having a total of 189 items or activities that required review for conflicts of interest, compared with 55 filers with a total of 67 items in the 2012 filing cycle. The increase may be attributed to the revised conflict tracking and management methodology, which provides a more consistent way of identifying and managing conflicts of interest at an early stage. Of those 189 items, 80 related to financial holdings, 43 to outside activities and 66 to family relationships. The programme's external reviewer, in consultation with the Ethics Office, issued individual recommendations aimed at mitigating and managing all actual and potential conflicts of interest.

25. In its resolution 63/250, the General Assembly endorsed a recommendation by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions that the Secretary-General provide data, by duty station, on the number of individuals covered by the programme, the number of individuals having complied with their filing obligations and the number of individuals having failed to comply with those obligations and the reasons therefor. Information concerning the 2013 financial disclosure programme by department or office may be found in the annex to the present report.

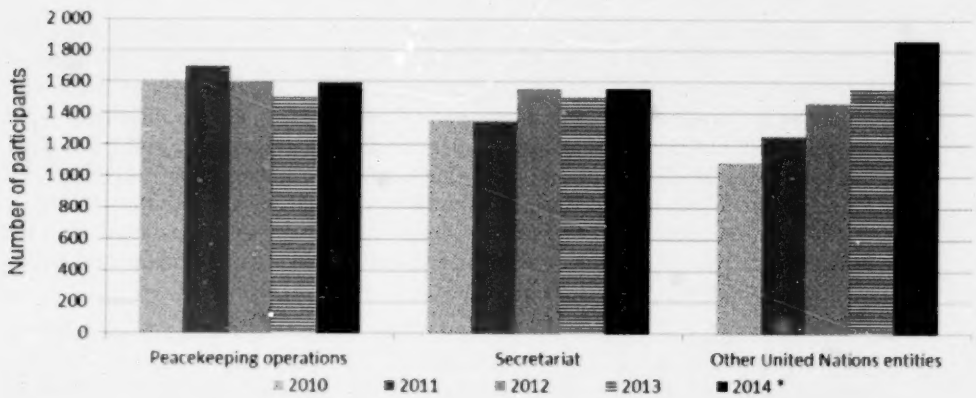
26. The voluntary public disclosure initiative is an annual exercise open to senior officials at the Assistant Secretary-General level and above who have fulfilled their confidential financial disclosure obligations under the programme. Signed voluntary disclosure forms are posted on the public website of the Secretary-General. Only those senior officials whose confidential financial disclosure forms are completed and closed are eligible to participate. By voluntarily making a public disclosure, senior officials demonstrate that they understand the importance of assuring the general public and Member States that they are not being influenced by any private interests in the discharge of their duties and responsibilities.

27. A total of 153 senior officials were eligible to participate in the 2013 exercise. Of those eligible, 93 opted to publicly disclose a summary of their assets, liabilities and outside interests, while 40 publicly affirmed that they had completed their

confidential financial disclosure as required by the Organization yet wished to maintain confidentiality for security, cultural or familial reasons. The remaining 20 officials include those who opted not to participate in the exercise, also for security, cultural or familial reasons, or did not complete the procedures required for participation by the closing date of the exercise. The 2013 participation rate is consistent with those of previous years and represents a continuously positive and encouraging development.

28. The 2014 filing cycle was successfully launched on 1 March 2014 with a total filer population of 5,018 staff members as at 31 July 2014. Figure V provides a graphic comparison of annual participation levels in the programme, by organizational grouping. The table shows the breakdown in figures by organizational grouping. The filer population has grown significantly over time, from 1,704 filers in 2006 to 4,065 in 2010 and 5,018 in 2014, representing an increase of 194 per cent compared with 2006.

Figure V
Financial disclosure participation by entity and filing year, 2010-2014



* As at 31 July 2014.

Financial disclosure participation by entity and filing year, 2010-2014

	Peacekeeping operations	*Secretariat*	*Other United Nations entities*	*Total by year*
2010	1 614	1 360	1 091	4 065
2011	1 697	1 351	1 258	4 306
2012	1 600	1 558	1 472	4 630
2013	1 508	1 505	1 560	4 573
2014[a]	1 594	1 558	1 866	5 018

[a] As at 31 July 2014.

29. In addition to serving the Secretariat, the Ethics Office administers the financial disclosure programme for other United Nations entities that opt to

participate on a cost-sharing basis.[1] While filers from the Secretariat, including peacekeeping operations, continue to account for most of the total population, the number of filers from other United Nations entities has increased, rising from 339 in 2006 to 1,091 in 2010 and 1,866 in 2014. Filers from other United Nations entities represent approximately one third of the total filing population each year (see table).

30. In addition, the Ethics Office provided technical and substantive guidance, including conflict of interest review methodology, to other United Nations entities that are establishing their own financial disclosure programmes.

31. In its resolution 66/234, the General Assembly called for a review of the programme's regulatory framework so as to accord the Ethics Office a greater role in determining who should be covered by the programme. The review forms part of a continuing process of consultations between the Office and other relevant offices within the Secretariat. The Office completed its internal review during the reporting period.

32. The General Assembly also called upon the Secretary-General to propose measures to address personal conflicts of interest that might arise after termination of employment with the United Nations. This entails a broader examination of employment-related policies beyond the purview of the programme. Further consideration of post-employment restrictions requires consultations with other offices concerned, including the Office of Legal Affairs, the Office of Human Resources Management and the Procurement Division.

33. The current review focuses on the existing regulatory framework, in the light of the history and developments in the financial disclosure programme and the collective experience gained to date in tackling and mitigating conflicts of interest. The review examines data from many sources, including various national conflict of interest and asset declaration systems, international agreements on corruption, policies governing declaration of interest programmes for national and international civil servants and compilation of information on financial disclosure and declaration of interest programmes throughout the United Nations system.

34. It has been found that the current financial disclosure programme of the Secretariat has positive attributes. It is the most encompassing of all the programmes, with many participants and a wide reach across functions, duty stations and departments. Staff members with the highest risk profiles are covered filers. A consistent methodology is used to detect, remedy and manage conflicts of interest. An external reviewer reviews disclosure statements, thus ensuring the independence and confidentiality of the review process. The secure web-based filing system is a stand-alone system that is not linked to any other in-house system (such as human resources, management or accounting systems) and is administered

[1] The following United Nations entities currently participate in the programme: the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East; the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research; the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute; the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS; the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa; the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; the United Nations Compensation Commission; the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; the United Nations Institute for Training and Research; the United Nations University; and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

outside the Organization's structures, thus ensuring a high level of data confidentiality and independence. The programme offers a very high level of data privacy and protection, given that access to information disclosed is limited to the Secretary-General, the Ethics Office or offices or persons specifically authorized in writing by the Secretary-General. Lastly, the programme covers a significant range of assets, liabilities, outside activities and interests or affiliations that staff are required to declare.

35. The review preliminarily identified several ways to enhance how the programme detects and manages conflicts of interest. From the experience of the programme since 2006, it has been found that, in general, the risk to the Organization of financial conflicts of interest may be considered low to medium. Outside activities and affiliations, however, represent a larger area of concern and increasingly require a more tailored approach.

36. Several areas for improvement are being considered, including sharpening the focus of the programme on risks of conflicts of interest, strengthening staff awareness, adjusting disclosure questions and requirements, which cover such areas as items to be disclosed, reporting thresholds and outside activities, and modifying the programme's scope of coverage to allow for certain staff to be included in the disclosure pool. Revisions to the current regulatory framework of the programme and its governing policy will be proposed within the context of broader consultations under way with the offices concerned within the Secretariat.

C. Protection of staff against retaliation for reporting misconduct and for cooperating with duly authorized audits or investigations

37. The Ethics Office administers the Secretariat's policy on protection against retaliation for reporting misconduct and for cooperating with duly authorized audits or investigation (see ST/SGB/2005/21). Developed as an accountability mechanism pursuant to the 2005 World Summit Outcome, and incorporating what were then global best practices, the policy was enacted in 2006 to encourage the reporting of serious misconduct, such as fraud, waste and corruption, that is harmful to the reputation and interests of the Organization.

38. Pursuant to the policy, the Ethics Office conducts preliminary reviews of retaliation complaints to determine whether a complainant has engaged in a protected activity and, if he or she has, whether the protected activity was a contributing factor in causing the alleged retaliation. If the Office determines that a prima facie case of retaliation has been established, the matter is referred to the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) for investigation. Pending the completion of the investigation, the Office may recommend interim protection measures to the Secretary-General to safeguard the interests of the complainant. The Office makes a final retaliation determination subsequent to its receipt and review of the completed investigation report and exhibits.

39. From 1 August 2013 to 31 July 2014, the Ethics Office received 55 inquiries relating to the policy, of which 4 were determined to be outside its jurisdiction. The Office responded to 32 of the inquiries with advice about the policy or information regarding how to report or otherwise address perceived misconduct. Staff members raising workplace concerns not covered by the policy were advised of measures that they could take to address concerns directly or were referred to appropriate offices,

including the Office of Human Resources Management, the head of department, office or mission, the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services, the Management Evaluation Unit, the Office of Staff Legal Assistance and the Staff Counsellor's Office.

40. Concerning those inquiries where staff alleged retaliation in accordance with Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2005/21, the Office initiated 19 preliminary reviews, of which 12 gave rise to findings of no prima facie case of retaliation. It determined that a prima facie case existed in two cases and referred them to OIOS for investigation. Five cases remain under preliminary review.

41. Regarding the first of the two cases referred to OIOS during the reporting period, the complainant was, pursuant to a recommendation by the Ethics Office that an interim protection measure be put in place, temporarily reassigned to another office pending the completion of the investigation process. While the Office subsequently determined that retaliation in the case had not been established, it advised the relevant head of office on appropriate measures to mitigate any future risk of retaliation. The second case referred to OIOS is under investigation.

42. The Ethics Office also handled cases that had been pending from prior periods, receiving completed investigation reports for a prima facie retaliation case referred to OIOS in 2011-2012 and three referred in 2012-2013.

43. Regarding the 2011-2012 referral, following its independent review of the investigation report and evidential materials, the Ethics Office determined that retaliation had been established. To remedy the matter, the Office recommended that the staff member should receive an upgraded performance evaluation, that prior changes made to the staff member's supervisory chain as an interim protection measure should be maintained and that the subject of the complaint should be referred for disciplinary action. All the recommendations have been implemented.

44. In relation to the three cases referred to OIOS in 2012-2013, one was settled to the satisfaction of the complainant before the conclusion of the OIOS investigation, with the support of the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services. The Ethics Office determined that there had been retaliation in the second case and recommended, among other things, that the complainant should be reimbursed for expenses incurred as a result of the retaliatory action and that the subject should be referred for disciplinary action.

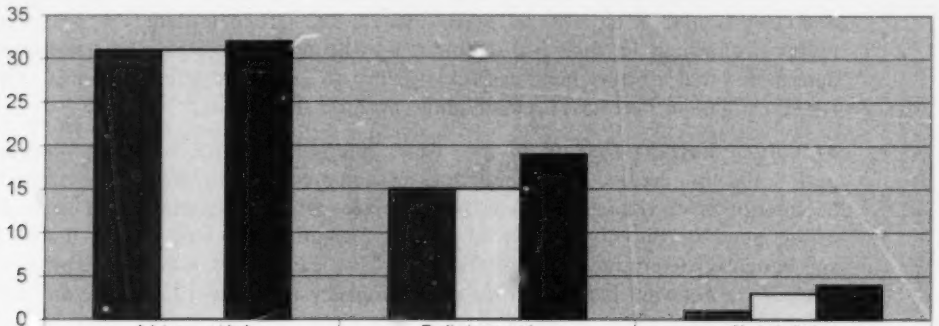
45. Concerning the third case, the Ethics Office determined that retaliation had not been established on the basis that the alleged retaliatory action had been taken prior to, and independent of, the complainant's protected activity. The Office nonetheless identified significant due process concerns in the course of its final case review, which it referred to the respective head of office. It also engaged with the relevant senior officials to ensure that the Organization continued to demonstrate proper care for the complainant.

46. Figure VI presents retaliation-related activity over the past three cycles. Since 1 August 2011, the Ethics Office has received 151 inquiries relating to the policy on protection against retaliation, determining that it had no jurisdiction in 8 of the matters. In 94 of the matters, it advised the staff member about the scope and applicability of the policy and about how to report and address misconduct other than retaliation. The Office initiated a preliminary review of the remaining 49 matters, finding that a prima facie case existed in 7 of them. It found retaliation

in three cases.[2] Five cases remain under preliminary review and one is currently being investigated.

Figure VI

Actions taken on requests for protection, 1 August 2011-31 July 2014



	Advice provided	Preliminary review	No jurisdiction
Aug 2011-July 2012	31	15	1
Aug 2012-July 2013	31	15	3
Aug 2013-July 2014	32	19	4

47. As with previous reporting cycles, most retaliation complaints received by the Ethics Office during the reporting period described workplace conflicts and interpersonal disputes. The policy continued to be used by staff as a labour dispute mechanism, in parallel with existing recourse mechanisms such as the Management Evaluation Unit, or a complaint under the Secretary-General's bulletin on prohibition of discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, and abuse of authority (ST/SGB/2008/5), rather than as a protection mechanism for the reporting of serious misconduct harmful to the interests of the Organization. The Office has a similar experience in its receipt of requests for advisory services, nearly 25 per cent of which involve allegations of wrongdoing other than retaliation.

48. With a view to enhancing the Organization's ability to promote the reporting of serious misconduct, protect whistle-blowers from retaliation and prevent retaliation from occurring, the Secretariat initiated an external expert review of its protection against retaliation policy in 2012-2013. Completed in the 2013-2014 reporting cycle, the expert review makes several recommendations, pursuant to emerging global best practices and considering the intent and purpose of the policy as originally formulated. Following receipt of the finalized review, the Ethics Office, in consultation with the Department of Management, the Office of Legal Affairs and OIOS, prepared a proposal on a revised protection against retaliation policy. The proposal is under review by the Executive Office of the Secretary-General. Thereafter, proposed amendments to the text of the Secretary-General's bulletin will be considered by the Office of Human Resources Management and submitted for consultations in accordance with the Organization's normal practice.

[2] As noted in paragraph 44, one additional retaliation case was resolved before the conclusion of the investigation.

D. Outreach, training and education

49. Pursuant to its mandate to strengthen an ethical culture throughout the Organization, the Ethics Office provides extensive outreach and confidential consultation to Secretariat staff, including those based outside New York. During the reporting period, the Office conducted field missions to the United Nations Office in Burundi, the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe, Uganda, the United Nations Mission in Liberia, the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus, the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, the United Nations Office at Nairobi (including the United Nations Support Office for the African Union Mission in Somalia), the United Nations Office at Geneva and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

50. During the outreach missions, the Ethics Office met some 1,100 individuals. It held individual consultations with staff, led town hall meetings and provided tailored ethics briefings for management teams. The visits resulted in many more staff from field offices and offices away from Headquarters seeking out the Office for confidential advice. In many locations, the Office provided more advisory services to staff at those locations during the course of the missions than it had in the entire previous year.

51. The Ethics Office, in conjunction with the Department of Political Affairs, provided 11 briefings for recently appointed members of panels of experts for several countries. Those briefings helped the panel members to understand the Organization's ethical expectations of them as consultants performing important services for the Organization.

52. The General Assembly, in its resolution 65/247, endorsed the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions that the Ethics Office conduct mandatory ethics induction briefings for senior leaders to positively impact the Organization's culture of ethics, integrity and accountability. In 2013-2014, the Director of the Office conducted 10 confidential ethics induction briefings with newly appointed Assistant Secretaries-General and Under-Secretaries-General, including Special Representatives and Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General. The briefings cover personal ethical responsibilities, what is termed "tone from the top", retaliation prevention, transparency and accountability measures.

53. Pursuant to its mandate to develop standards and education on ethics and to ensure annual ethics training for all staff, the Ethics Office has further expanded its training library. The Office's training strategy encompasses three levels: initial awareness-building, basic ethics education and training and advanced training to build ethical decision-making and leadership skills. The Office, as subject-matter expert, designs and develops the Secretariat's ethics curriculum and collaborates with other offices, such as the Office for Human Resources Management, the Department of Field Support and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, to implement the curriculum.

54. Online training is best suited for establishing basic expectations for ethical behaviour. In 2013-2014, the Ethics Office and the Office of Human Resources Management prepared a new, basic, online ethics training programme, entitled

"Ethics and integrity at the United Nations". The 90-minute programme, which is based on training developed by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, will be available to all staff worldwide through Inspira from 1 September 2014. The legacy online training programme, known as "integrity awareness initiative", will be retired upon the launch of the new programme. Since 2005, more than 55,000 people have completed the integrity awareness initiative training.

55. In 2012-2013, the Ethics Office launched leadership dialogues to ensure that all staff members participate in annual ethics training. More than 28,000 staff members, including in excess of 16,000 in peacekeeping and special political missions, have participated in one-hour dialogue sessions. That participation rate, encompassing two thirds of the staff population, together with the overwhelmingly positive feedback received, reflects a significant desire among staff and managers to engage on important ethics issues. The Office has developed materials for the 2014 leadership dialogue, which will deal with how to treat one another with respect and tolerance. The topic will explore how the Preamble to the Charter applies to staff members in their daily workplace interactions.

56. Advanced ethics education assists staff in thinking critically about issues of ethics and integrity and engaging in ethical decision-making to solve real-world dilemmas. A workshop entitled "Professional ethics and integrity in our daily work" continued to be delivered throughout 2013-2014. Since the launch of the workshop in 2006, more than 14,700 staff members system-wide have participated. In the reporting period, 231 staff attended workshop sessions. The Office also works with the United Nations System Staff College in offering seminars on advanced ethics decision-making that are incorporated into the Staff College's leadership development curricula.

57. The Ethics Office website continues to provide essential ethics information. In 2013-2014, it had more than 64,500 individual visits. It is available via iSeek and www.un.org/en/ethics and offers materials, links and other information relating to ethics in the United Nations.

58. In 2013, the Ethics Office document entitled "The roadmap: a staff member's guide to finding the right place", won a "UN 21" Award in the field of knowledge management. Now in its third year, the document has received Organization-wide recognition for its value in informing staff of resources available to tackle their concerns. In 2014, the Office updated the document to reflect recent changes in office locations stemming from the capital master plan.

E. Standard-setting and policy support

59. During the reporting period, the Ethics Office was granted observer status on the Management Committee. The Office's contributions have been included in the development of the enterprise risk management framework, the reports of the Secretary-General on accountability, new approaches to performance management, enhancements to the internal investigations framework and outreach and communications to staff concerning procedural justice in the workplace.

60. The Ethics Office held consultations with and provided substantive policy advice to other entities of the United Nations system and other international

organizations in relation to their development of ethics-related standards governing staff conduct and behaviour and on the establishment of ethics offices and policies. In particular, the Office advised several entities, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the International Organization for Migration, the International Maritime Organization, the Universal Postal Union and the International Criminal Court, on the development or amendment of policies governing the financial disclosure programme and management of conflicts of interest, post-employment restrictions and outside activities. Upon the request of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Ethics Office participated in reviews of the internal structures of the United Nations that serve to reduce the risk of corruption.

61. The Ethics Office continues to work closely with partners throughout the Organization to revise and update policies. During the reporting period, it contributed to the reformulation of the gifts and honours policy of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. It also worked closely with the Department of Management on methods of tracking and disposing of honours, decorations, favours, gifts or remuneration.

62. In recognition of the rapid growth and application of social media, the Ethics Office is participating in the development of a social media policy upon the request of the Department of Public Information. The initiative will help to ensure that staff members who use social media in their official or personal capacity receive guidance on the Organization's expectations concerning their online conduct.

F. Ethical leadership, culture and metrics

63. The 2013 cycle of the Secretary-General's senior manager compacts included an objective of supporting the Organization's commitment to an ethical culture. The Director of the Ethics Office conducted confidential ethical leadership behaviour assessments for all Under-Secretaries-General who signed such compacts. Aggregate data from both the 2011 and 2013 cycles of the assessment form the basis for an ethical leadership model for United Nations leaders, highlighting the ethical foundation for personal leadership values, behaviour and decision-making. The model has been shared with the Office of Human Resources Management because it contemplates using the quantitative research in a comprehensive multi-rater feedback development tool ("360 degree feedback") for Assistant Secretaries-General and Under-Secretaries-General. The model may also prove useful in predicting behavioural strengths and challenges that incoming senior leaders may face as they integrate into the Organization and assume their new leadership roles.

64. In 2012, the Ethics Office undertook a formal ethics and reputational risk assessment for United Nations peacekeeping operations. The assessment identified the most significant ethical and reputational risks facing peacekeeping and developed quantifiable metrics for tracking the impact over time of the Organization's commitment to ethics in the workplace. At that time, the eight participating missions received customized summaries of their data, including suggestions for developing specific action plans.

65. In 2014, the assessment was extended through an electronic survey to five additional peacekeeping missions to obtain baseline data from a majority of missions, operating under differing mandates. The aggregate data from both survey

cohorts will assist the United Nations in tackling key ethical risks and challenges facing peacekeeping missions, in addition to particular risks that affect individual missions. The experience from the research may also prove useful should the United Nations undertake an Organization-wide staff survey on attitudes, opinions and beliefs concerning ethical risk and culture.

IV. Ethics Panel of the United Nations

66. The Ethics Panel of the United Nations (established in December 2007 as the United Nations Ethics Committee and renamed by the General Assembly in its resolution 66/234) is mandated to create a unified set of ethical standards and policies of the Secretariat and of the separately administered organs and programmes and to consult on particularly complex matters having system-wide implications. The Director of the Ethics Office chairs the Panel.

67. The Ethics Panel is composed of the heads of the ethics offices of the funds and programmes and the Secretariat. In accordance with the relevant Secretary-General's bulletin (ST/SGB/2007/11, sect. 2.2), the Ethics Office provides ethics services to those separately administered organs and programmes that have not yet designated an ethics officer.

68. During 2013-2014, new heads of the ethics offices of the World Food Programme and the United Nations Population Fund were appointed on either a full-term or temporary basis. They received extensive orientation briefings from the Chair of the Ethics Panel and technical advice from the Chair and Panel members.

69. During the reporting period, the Ethics Panel held 10 formal sessions. It focused on enhancing coherence and consistency in the application of ethics standards and reviewed lessons learned from the implementation of its core mandates, in particular financial disclosure and conflict of interest management, protection against retaliation and ethics training. The Panel reviewed the draft annual ethics office reports prepared by each member.

70. Member offices continued to develop and/or adapt core ethics training to each agency's needs and environments. Member offices sought to diversify delivery methods in order to expand the benefit and impact of ethics training. By exchanging materials, members are able to expand upon the experiences of colleagues and create a more robust set of applicable approaches.

71. Members of the Ethics Panel provided valuable input to the Secretariat's review of the policy frameworks for protection against retaliation and the financial disclosure programme. Those discussions enhanced policy harmonization among members and the sharing of lessons learned.

72. An Ethics Panel member organization requested the Director of the Ethics Office, as the Chair of the Panel, to review the effectiveness of its current ethics function. The review presented recommendations for a midterm ethics strategy and suggested implementing action.

73. Emerging ethical challenges posing individual, institutional and process risks continued to receive attention from the Ethics Panel. The issues included the use of social media, risk assessments, the parameters of confidentiality, third-party due diligence and judicial challenges.

74. The Ethics Office and members of the Ethics Panel participated in the activities of the Ethics Network of Multilateral Organizations. The Network was established in June 2010 in support of the efforts of the Secretary-General to promote system-wide collaboration on ethics-related issues within the United Nations family. Serving as a broad forum of ethics functions from United Nations system entities, affiliated international organizations and international financial institutions, the Network provides support for professional development, benchmarking and the exchange of ethics policies and practices. The sixth meeting of the Network, held in Copenhagen from 9 to 11 July 2014, was hosted by the United Nations Office for Project Services.

75. Within the United Nations system, the Ethics Panel continues to function as the sole mandated mechanism to promote the coherent and consistent application of ethical standards and to consult on important matters having system-wide implications. The Panel supports harmonized ethics and integrity policies and practices among member organizations, thereby facilitating stronger and healthier institutions. This mechanism is a primary example of how the various entities within the United Nations system can promote coherence.

V. Observations and conclusions

76. In recent years, the Ethics Office has devoted significant effort to promoting a culture of ethics and ensuring that staff members of the United Nations around the world have access to ethics advice that is independent, confidential, impartial and helpful. To create an environment in which staff members are comfortable speaking up, requesting advice and seeking guidance, the Office must be seen as a credible resource that staff members trust. Although electronic, telephonic and other remote communications are extremely useful and cost-effective, trust-based relationships are enhanced through in-person contact. The Office has increased its visibility beyond Headquarters in order to reach offices away from Headquarters, peacekeeping and field missions, special political missions and regional commissions. While the Office is able to conduct several outreach missions, it is unable to reach all locations, even on a biennial rotation cycle. If the Office is to have the impact that a values-based institution such as the United Nations requires, it must have sufficient human capital and resources to be readily available to the staff where they work and live.

77. The Organization faces risks that are individual, institutional and procedural in nature. The Ethics Office has the capacity to advise other departments and offices regarding each such category, beyond its primary focus on individual integrity risks. To this end, it is expected that the Office would be engaged more extensively in identifying and tackling those institutional and procedural risks. In this way, the Office will be able to highlight key ethical components so that the Organization can integrate those considerations into its operational decisions.

78. Global attention to whistle-blowing and retaliation continues. Under its current mandate, the Ethics Office has an advisory role, which includes encouraging staff to speak up and report misconduct (e.g. whistle-blowing) and cooperate in audits or investigations and protecting whistle-blowers from retaliation. As currently structured, the Secretariat's protection against retaliation policy is often used by staff as an additional forum in which to have their interpersonal workplace

grievances heard. While important, such grievances may be better considered through existing dispute resolution systems that are designed for that purpose. The current review of the policy is intended to shift the focus towards promoting the reporting of misconduct that is harmful to the operations and interests of the United Nations. Finding common ground and an approach appropriate to the Organization will be a challenging task, but one that can be met with the cooperation of all departments, offices and staff.

79. The independence of the Ethics Office is one of its key strengths and distinguishing characteristics. If limitations are placed on that independence in the future, it would likely require a comprehensive reassessment of whether the Office truly can function as an independent office in the fulfilment of its mandate.

80. The Ethics Office employs several tools to evaluate the ethical culture of the Organization, in order that it may better advise the United Nations regarding how to promote the desired culture in the future. The Office observes that the Organization and its staff face challenges in cultivating an organizational culture that is based on accountability and transparency. Yet, a truly ethical United Nations must examine and balance the mutuality of rights, duties and obligations between and among staff members, the Organization, Member States and other key stakeholders. It is this mutual and interdependent social contract that provides the foundation for an ethical organizational culture. Senior leaders are best equipped to lead the effort to articulate and motivate intentional cultural change on a sustained basis.

81. With these challenges, the Ethics Office continues to promote adherence by the Organization, its staff and stakeholders to the expectations set forth in the Charter.

82. **The General Assembly is requested to take note of the present report.**

Annex

Financial disclosure programme compliance level, 2013

United Nations entity	*Required filers*	*Completed filings*	*Non-compliant(s)*
United Nations Secretariat			
Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions secretariat	2	2	–
Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate	4	4	–
Department for General Assembly and Conference Management	25	25	–
Department of Economic and Social Affairs	52	52	–
Department of Management	255	255	–
Department of Political Affairs, including special political missions	431	430	1
Department of Public Information	37	37	–
Department of Safety and Security	23	23	–
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific	45	45	–
Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia	32	32	–
Economic Commission for Africa	98	98	–
Economic Commission for Europe	10	10	–
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean	55	55	–
Ethics Office	11	11	–
Executive Office of the Secretary-General	12	12	–
Office for Disarmament Affairs	6	6	–
Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs	26	26	–
Office of Administration of Justice	2	2	–
Office of Internal Oversight Services	16	16	–
Office of Legal Affairs	21	21	–
Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States	4	4	–
Office of the President of the General Assembly	6	6	–
Office of the Special Adviser on Africa	2	2	–
Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict	1	1	–
Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict	3	3	–
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights	21	21	–
Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services	3	3	–
Peacebuilding Support Office	4	4	–
Regional Commissions New York office	1	1	–
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	26	26	–
United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund	64	64	–
United Nations Office at Geneva	77	77	–
United Nations Office at Nairobi	45	45	–

United Nations entity	*Required filers*	*Completed filings*	*Non-compliant(s)*
United Nations Office at Vienna	17	17	–
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime	60	60	–
United Nations Office to the African Union	5	5	–
United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination	3	3	–
Subtotal (excluding peacekeeping operations)	**1 505**	**1 504**	**1**
Peacekeeping operations	1 508	1 508	–
United Nations bodies/agencies and others	1 560	1 558	2
Total	**4 573**	**4 570**	**3**